F. W. Fitts

The Warham Guild

Examples of

Church Ornaments

1920

The Secretary will be glad to forward, on application, copies of the publications of the Guild except Nos. 3, 4, 7.

1. Short Statement of the Aims of the Guild.
2. Descriptive Leaflet of New Altar in the Lady Chapel of Fairford Church.
3. Illustration of Cope and Mitre made by the Guild for the Bishop of Oxford (Dr. Gore). [*Out of print.*]
4. Catalogue of the First Exhibition of the Warham Guild (1913). [*Out of print.*]
5. Descriptive Illustrated Catalogue of the Ornaments of the Ministers.
6. The "Black and White List," giving prices of Albes, Gowns, Surplices, Rochets, etc.
7. Occasional Leaflet, describing and illustrating a small Altar. [*Out of print.*]
8. Illustrated list of "Some examples of Church Ornaments."
9. A Retrospect.
10. Monuments and Memorials. By Dr. Dearmer.
11. The Altar. By F. C. Eeles.
12. War Memorials. By F. C. Eeles.
13. St. Paul's Cloke. By Dr. Dearmer.
14. The Altar according to the English Tradition. By the Rev. E. Hermitage Day, D.D., F.S.A.
15. The Chancel Screen. By F. E. Howard.
16. The Chalice and Paten. By Dr. Dearmer.

Apply The Secretary,
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The Warham Guild

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ONE of the chief objects of the Warham Guild is to act as agents whereby parsons, churchwardens, and donors can be easily put in touch with artists and craftsmen. There is at the present day no dearth of skilful artificers in every kind of work, as the Arts and Crafts and other Exhibitions have shown us for thirty years past. It would in fact be possible to fill our churches with beautiful things,—things worthy to be compared with the glorious treasures of old time. It would be possible, were it not for one difficulty—the client does not know how to find the right artist for the particular work he requires. For this two things are necessary: a show-room where the work of artists can be seen, and an agency through which clients can be put in touch with artists. This the Warham Guild has come into existence to undertake. It does indeed supply the humbler kinds of church work, surplices,

and such-like things, which also can be made very beautiful, simple as they are. But it aims above all at setting the artists to work in our incomparable parish churches, which, alas! have been so injured by unthinking decoration and bad ornaments during the past eighty years. If this object of the Guild is realized sufficiently by the Church public, a new era may well dawn upon us. This is really possible at the present day, since only a readily accessible agency is wanted, there being so many artists anxious to work for the Church. The Warham Guild has been able to come forward to supply such an agency, and to help on the work which is so much needed.

Below we give a few examples of such ornaments as are easily reproduced in illustration, excluding architectural work as well as the ornaments of the ministers, which are illustrated in other publications of the Guild.

PERCY DEARMER,

CHAIRMAN.

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1. *Chalice.*

It will perhaps be of interest if we present our examples of Church metal ornaments in their general historical order. The chalice naturally comes first, since it dates from the first century. There actually exists one fresco in which is depicted a chalice of c. 125 A.D. For six centuries

however the chalice is represented with two handles, and the Gourdon example, which is the oldest extant example (before 527) is of this type. Long before the chalice had been withdrawn from the laity, however, it was found more convenient to discard the handles, and to model the knop and stem so that it could be most readily and safely grasped.

In the above example by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood this convenient mediaeval pattern is adhered to ; the later post-reformation type, with a very deep bowl, being less easy to handle or to cleanse. Most priests find it more convenient to use two chalices when there are over eighty or ninety communicants.

The paten is not shown. Readers are referred to the Warham Guild booklet, *Examples of Chalices and Patens*, for further illustrations.

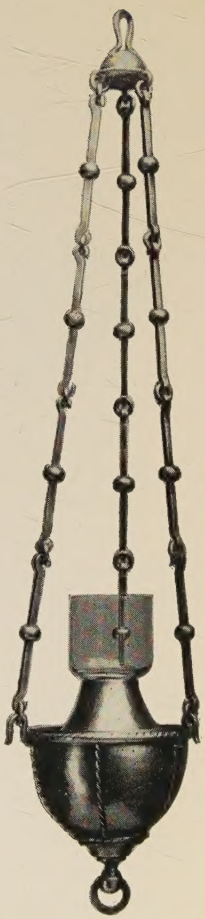
2. *Alms Dish.*

THE offertory dish is as old, or nearly as old, as the chalice. Indeed, in the second century, if not in the first, the offertory dish and the paten were the same thing: the patens were in fact very large, so as to receive the offerings in kind of the faithful, some of these offerings in the form of small loaves or rolls of bread being set apart for the Eucharist. Many large patens (or as we might say,

alms-dishes) were therefore used : in the fourth century, as we learn from the *Liber Pontificalis*, the Emperor Constantine presented to the Lateran basilica "7 patens of gold, weighing each 30 pounds ; 16 patens of silver, weighing each 30 pounds." To S. Peter's he gave a more wonderful paten—"a golden paten with a tower of purest gold, with a dove adorned with emeralds and jacinths and 215 pearls, weighing 30 pounds ; 5 patens of silver weighing 15 pounds." The work and office of a deacon in those days must have been no sinecure, but they would seem to have objected to carrying patens that weighed over thirty pounds.

The alms-dish here shown, designed by Mr. G. E. Sedding, is neither of gold nor silver, but of beaten brass, the design representing the Israelites bearing the bunch of grapes from the Promised Land.

3. *A Sanctuary Lamp.*



Lamps are far older than candlesticks as Church ornaments. Christian devices appear upon clay lamps as early as the end of the third century, but these were probably for domestic use : we do not know about the church use at this time. The *Liber Pontificalis* gives us the most astonishing information about the hanging lamps and candelabra in the fourth century. The Emperor Constantine gave to the Lateran basilica "a chandelier (*farus*) of purest gold which hung under the ciborium, with 50 dolphins of purest gold, weighing 50 pounds, with chains which weighed 25 pounds." The single lamps (often made in the form of a fish or dolphin) probably hung down from this great corona. Besides this, under the four arches of the ciborium (the vaulted canopy over the altar) hung "4 crowns of purest gold, with 20 dolphins, weighing each 15 pounds." There was an even more gorgeous *farus cantharus* hanging before the altar, with 80 dolphins. R. de Fleury calculates that there were altogether in the Lateran (including the 45 silver lamps in the nave and the 65 in the aisles) 8,730 separate lights.

How modest we are nowadays, the above simple example by Mr. F. E. Howard shows.

4. *Another Lamp.*

THIS graceful example was designed by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts.

The custom of using lamps rather than candlesticks for the altar continued for a thousand years. In the eleventh century fresco of S. Clement celebrating the Holy Communion (at S. Clement's, Rome : reproduced in Dr. Dearmer's *The Ornaments of the Ministers*, Plate 14, 1920 edition), a circular corona bearing seven lamps hangs from the midst of the ciborium, and four lamps hang at the sides, but there is nothing on the altar except the chalice, paten, and book. The paten in this fresco is of the size usual at the present day.

5. *A Censer.*

Censers, like sanctuary lamps, are first heard of in the fourth century. Constantine, we learn from the *Liber Pontificalis*, presented to S. Peter's "a censer (*thymiamaterium*) of purest gold, adorned on all sides with gems to the number of 60, weighing 15 pounds." The Christmas festival was also instituted in the fourth century: if we object to censers on the ground that they are no earlier, we ought to object to Christmas on the same ground.

We do not know if this censer of Constantine's was a standing censer or not; but in an ivory relief at Trèves, of the sixth century, the spectators wave censers from chains out of the windows, as the Emperor, bishops, and courtiers pass by. In a mosaic at S. Vitale, Ravenna, (sixth century) the deacon holds a chained censer. The

oldest extant censer is at Mannheim, and is probably also of the sixth century.

The example here shown is of copper, and was designed and made by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts.

6. *An Incense Boat and Spoon.*

We do not know in what sort of vessel the incense was carried during the first six centuries. The mediaeval and modern type here represented doubtless owes its survival to its convenience. Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts were the craftsmen in this case.

7. *A Processional Cross.*

Designed and executed by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts.

We begin to find representations of staves with cross-heads in the sculpture of the fifth century, at first in representations of sacred personages. The custom of carrying a *labarum* in the army was traditional in the Roman Empire, and passed naturally into church use in the carrying of standards, crosses, and banners of very diverse kinds and shapes, just as churchwardens carry ornamented staves at the present day.

8. *Another Processional Cross.*

Designed by Mr. Horace Minns. In the midst is a medallion representing S. Aidan.

9. *A Third Processional Cross.*

DESIGNED by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts.

10. *Cross and Candlesticks.*

In the Middle Ages the processional cross was sometimes taken from its staff and set upon the altar. Thus very slowly there grew up the custom of having an altar-cross —so slowly that it was by no means a general custom by the time of the Reformation, most mediaeval pictures being without it. It is therefore by no means a necessary ornament, common though it is at the present day. When the reredos is elaborate, and, as it ought to be, is strictly contiguous with the altar, there is seldom a good place for a cross. But many altars have so gloomy a dorsal that they seem empty without a cross. *The* place, however, for the cross is over the rood screen.

This cross with the candlesticks was made by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts.

11. *A Second Cross and Candlesticks.*

The processional use of tapers, like that of crosses, is earlier than the fixed use. Sometimes in the Middle Ages the candlesticks were set upon the altar after a procession. A light was required during the Mass, but it was often merely a torch held by the clerk. Up to the Reformation it was common for the light to be thus held, or for two lights to be held by servers, or even by the deacon and subdeacon. But it was obviously more convenient for the lights not to be held, and so gradually the custom gained

ground of placing one light or two in candlesticks and setting them on the altar. But still, before the Reformation, the older tradition survived, in the candlesticks being put away out of service time. At the present day it is the general and convenient practice to keep the two candlesticks permanently on the holy table.

Where there is not sufficient money for metal candlesticks of genuine craftsman's work, it is better to have wooden ones of good shape, gilt, and not to buy cheap metal ones which are worse than useless.

The elaborate and beautiful examples shown above are by Mr. Bainbridge Reynolds.

12. *Silver Lavabo Bowl.*

The custom of washing the hands before celebrating is ancient, though not much is known about the methods in earlier times. It is important from every point of view that the priest should wash his hands before touching the bread and the vessels, and communicating the people.

This bowl, by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts, is a beautiful and fitting example of a war memorial of inexpensive character.

13. *Churchwarden's Mace.*

The good old custom of the churchwardens carrying staves at the head of processions never quite died out, and many fine examples of silver staff-heads exist in the City churches. Nothing makes such a good head to a procession as a group consisting of the verger carrying a shorter mace, followed by the churchwardens with staves long enough to touch the ground. The verger's mace is shorter and with a lighter ornamental head, because it is used a good deal more than those of the wardens.

The above example by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts was made, as the reader can see, for a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Churchwardens' maces can however be of a still heavier and more elaborate type, such as the silver mace illustrated in the *English Churchman's Kalendar* for 1915 (April leaf).

14. *Verger's Mace.*

THIS staff-head in copper, designed by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts, for a church dedicated to S. Peter, may be taken as a normal type of the more handy form used by vergers, just as No. 13 may be taken as a light and inexpensive example of a warden's staff-head.

15. *Vases.*

Flower vases can hardly be considered ecclesiastical ornaments in the technical sense at all, since it cannot be claimed for them that they are covered by the Ornaments Rubric. The use of flowers and greenery in church is indeed both beautiful and traditional, but the use of flowers on the altar itself is less easy to justify, and would probably have never come in unless the gorgeous low reredoses of the Middle Ages had been destroyed. It may even be said that flowers may be put anywhere in church, but that one of the last places to be chosen should be the altar.

When they are so used, they should at least be fresh, and should be removed when Sunday is over. The spectacle of an altar covered with decaying petals is not a pleasant one. In most churches there are many

better places for flowers in vases, such as a niche by the door, ledges, or a little table, in the aisles, or the rood-screen, stalls, credence, or sills or ledges near the altar.

These vases in brass, simple, as they should be, and shaped to hold flowers properly, were made by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts.

Pectoral Cross. No. 16.

16. *Pectoral Cross.*

We use the word "pectoral" in its proper sense—not as meaning episcopal, but "hanging upon the breast." Any man or woman may wear a cross if he or she likes, though it is not customary in the West for priests to do so. Some of our Anglican prelates have recently adopted the custom; and for an ornament so constantly and conspicuously worn it is specially important that the design should be very good. This can truly be said of the pectoral cross here illustrated, which was designed and made in silver with gold rays by Mr. F. Smythe Greenwood and Mr. H. Alwyn Watts for the Guild.